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Why Spending That Extra Five Minutes at Home is Important

By Reagan Benton



Is it better to be securely attached or insecurely avoidant? What is attachment anyway? Attachment is a survival impulse that keeps infants in love with their caregivers and protected. Mary Ainsworth experimented to see how infants would react to strangers in an unfamiliar environment without their mothers. Securely attached infants would become upset when their mother left, but then accept her warmly upon her return. However, insecure avoidant infants would become upset when their mother left and remain upset after her return. Secure attachment benefits us throughout our lives by building basic trust, creating a positive sense of self, and developing positive relationships with other people.

First, secure attachment builds basic trust. Secure attachment comes from sensible and loving care givers. Because these care givers have instilled love in their children, the kids begin to trust the world around them, this is called basic trust. This trust is instilled because when they were young and they turned to their mother, either in distress or just for comfort, she was always receptive of them. Children who have secure attachment are more likely to have the desire to explore the world around them because they know they have their parents, their safe place. The children know that if something happens in their life that makes them upset and they have no one to turn to, they can take their problems to their parents for support. On the other hand, children who are insecure avoidant develop a sense of basic mistrust of the world. These children are more likely to shy away from the world and become withdrawn because their parents were not present for their needs in the past.

Additionally, secure attachment produces a positive sense of self. When kids develop a positive sense of self, they realize they are capable of doing things on their own, and they begin to become comfortable with who they are and what they can do. Erik Erikson said that children had to have basic trust in their environment before they could develop a positive sense of self. Obviously, a child who was not securely attached would have a harder time developing a positive sense of self because they would not have basic trust in their environment. For example, if a girl's parents are supportive of her efforts in a dance class, then she will be more open to continue dance and to trying other things. The more supportive her family is of her ideas and characteristics, the more likely she will be to experiment with what she wants and to love herself. If this same girl's parents do not ask her about dance or attend her recitals, then she will be more likely to associate herself with less importance and less likely to repeat dance or try other new things. Moreover, the girl whose parents encouraged her dancing endeavors is more likely to continue to step out and follow her dreams than the girl whose parents did not seem to care.

Lastly, secure attachment brings improved positive relationships with others. The safe place that children find in their parents changes as they grow up. People gradually shift from confiding in parents, to friends in their teen years, and then life partners once they get married. Also, if people are confident in who they are, then they are better able to love others and develop meaningful relationships with them. A meaningful relationship is one where the two people can interact and feel safe with each other. With this in mind, consider a boy who was insecure avoidant with his parents. He is in a relationship with a girl, but he does not know how to communicate his feelings because he never has before. In contrast, if that same boy had been securely attached with his parents then he would have a more open and successful relationship with his girlfriend. Therefore, insecure avoidant children can become adults that are withdrawn or antisocial. If a person has never felt safe with someone in a relationship, then they may not be as willing to discuss their life because they do not know what it means to have this relationship. One has to know how to create this meaningful relationship with others, and they are less likely to know how to do that if they have never experienced one in their youth.

In essence, secure attachment leads to basic trust which yields a positive sense of self which ultimately leads to better relationships with others. Meaningful relationships sprout from secure attachments; therefore, the way a child responds to their mother affects them well into adulthood. Secure attachments offer a better quality of life to those who have experienced them, so the work to prevent children with insecure attachments is important. Caretakers should always respond to children's needs to feel safe and loved—this way secure attachments are formed and lives are improved. We should spend that five extra minutes—or make it ten.

